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Why OER?

OER Commons would like to welcome you to the ever-expanding community of educators and life-long learners who are using and creating content in the **open education** movement. The objective of this hands-on course is to help you quickly start using and creating **open educational resources** (OER). This module “Why OER?” is the first module in this self-paced online course “The How-tos” of OER Commons.” Here is the complete list of modules:

- [Why OER?](#)
- [Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#)
- [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)
- [My OER Portfolio](#)
- [Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)
- [OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#)
- [What is Localization?](#)
- [Students and OER](#)
- [What are Open Textbooks?](#)
- OER Case Study
- [Glossary](#)

These modules can be completed in any order; work on the ones most relevant to your needs. Consider working through this module “Why OER?” first: it provides the framework you’ll need for the other modules.

Let’s begin by making sure we are on the same page with some OER basics.

What is OER?

Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching and learning materials that are freely available online for anyone to use, whether you are an instructor, student, or self-learner. OER can exist as smaller, stand-alone resources that can be mixed and combined to form larger pieces of content, or as larger course modules or full courses.

OER is also a process of engaging with the materials. This process involves sharing materials that you have created, either individually or in groups with other teachers and/or learners; using and adapting others' materials for your own use; and sharing back modifications to or comments about others' materials so that future users can benefit. In this course, when we use the term OER, we are talking about the process of engaging with the materials.

Here are a few examples of materials that have been submitted for anyone to use and adapt for their own use:

[Circle of Pong](#)

From The Tech Museum of Innovation come a collection of fun design challenges which present students from grades 4 to 8 with problems that require them to apply their knowledge just like designers and engineers in the "real world." In this challenge, learners use their knowledge of potential and kinetic energy, and explore forces and motion to place a ball into the center of a 6-foot diameter circle. These informal exercises are licensed for use and reuse under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5.

[Time Management](#)

From KQED Education Network, this lesson's aim is to develop students' understanding of the importance of managing time. It is the first lesson in the study skills series and is intended to support adult learners who are embarking on a course of study and need to acquire skills which will help them to be successful. The lessons are designed as a package with key skills reinforced in each subsequent lesson so that a study culture is developed over time. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.5.

[An Ad for an Element](#)

A lesson plan for Grades 9–12 Chemistry and Physical Science from LEARN NC. Build an understanding of the structure and properties of matter while practicing communications skills. The author comments: "My students really showed creativity. I have had every form of ad turned in

from video commercials to pamphlets to movie posters". Licensed for use and reuse under Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 2.5.

These materials, as well as thousands of others, can be found in [OER Commons](#), a comprehensive open learning network that provides the platform for facilitating the OER process.

OER is much more than a collection of resources. It is more than a thing. It is also a process that is dependent upon teachers and learners who continuously improve the resources, and share their use scenarios so that others can also benefit. It is also about collaborating to create materials.

Why OER?

OER is a relatively new movement in education; educators and learners as well as learning institutions are driving its development. OER provides an alternative to the rising costs of education. For example, in some countries like South Africa, some educators and learners are tapping into OER as the only source for textbooks. OER provides an opportunity to try new ways of teaching and learning, many of which are more collaborative and participatory.

Some educators are using OER as a way to get students more involved, using the OER process as a way to collaborate with them on content creation. This process brings students into a larger context of learning and sharing knowledge beyond the four walls of their classroom.

Flexibility is a key concept in OER—materials can be adapted for your specific needs. Because these materials can be searched by a wide variety of criteria, you can quickly find what you specifically need.

OER is relevant, usable, adaptable, and free

Because of the flexibility of OER materials, you can make them relevant to you and your students' needs. Why are educators and learners prompted to

search for teaching and learning materials? An [OER Commons survey](#) of over 400 teachers and learners in 2007 reveals that:

- 29% use OER **to expand knowledge or learn a new topic**
- 17% use OER **to stay current**
- 15% use OER **to get ideas for lessons or coursework**
- 11% use OER **to supplement lessons or coursework**
- 10% use OER **to improve teaching methods**
- 10% use OER **to connect with teachers or learners who have similar interests**
- 5% have **other reasons** why they use OER
- 3% use OER **to complete a class assignment.**

Discussions with teachers and learners illustrate the precise ways they are using OER materials. One educator in particular describes his experiences with OER as a way to create a much-needed textbook with his colleagues. Here's what he says:

“I guess about five years ago, being a professor, there was just a loose group of individuals who had expertise in signal processing spread over the country and we all were teaching and thinking about teaching courses. We all kind of felt like there was no common textbook that all were excited about. There just seemed to be a need like a textbook for this class. So it just seemed to be a possibility for all of us together to take notes and things that we have developed for classes and combine them into this particular way.”

And a student describes his use of OER to complement his notes and lectures:

“I just look for any concepts that I need for [my] classes that are a little shady from my notes and lectures. That's pretty much what I do now.”

OER Commons, an evolution in learning

OER Commons is in the forefront in providing a teaching and learning network of shared materials, from K-12 through college, from algebra to zoology, open to everyone to use and add to. We'll be using OER Commons in this course for all the hands-on activities.

As of 2007, OER Commons has nearly seventy institutional [partner collections](#) bringing over 11,000 resources to instructors and learners. And it's growing every day!

You, the important contributor

The power of OER is the contribution of individual educators and learners, like you. Your contribution makes a difference worldwide in education. The following two stories illustrate how OER has touched the lives of both students and educators.

OER stories from around the world

[Students](#) in New York and Barcelona collaborate on a global climate change presentation.

[An educator in Hong Kong](#) finds group exercises for her learning sciences class.

Your experience using open and freely shared course-related materials is valuable in the reuse and evolution of the materials. [Tell us your story](#); how you've used these materials and how their use has impacted how you teach or learn.

Activities in this Module

The following activities have been created to help you get started with OER using OER Commons.

Activity: Join OER Commons

If you don't have a free OER Commons account yet, complete the [short registration form](#). Your account will be created immediately.

Activity: Join the OER Commons electronic newsletter

To receive regular updates about the exciting developments in OER Commons, subscribe to the newsletter on the [OER Commons](#) homepage. Look for the blue box on the right side of the computer screen called "Sign Up to Receive e-News!" Enter your email address and click the "Sign Up Now" button.

You can also view [archives of the newsletter](#) online.

Activity: Using OER materials

In the OER Commons discussion "[How and Why of OER](#)," post your stories, suggestions, and questions with using OER in your teaching and learning. Here are some questions to consider in your post:

1. How have you used OER in your teaching and learning?
2. How have your students used OER? What were their learning outcomes?
3. What have been your challenges in using OER?
4. What impact has OER had on your institution?
5. If you had unlimited resources, how would you contribute to the OER?

If you haven't started using OER, consider these questions:

1. What challenges have you had in trying to use OER?
2. What would assist you in starting to use OER?

Optional Activity: Facebook

If you are a Facebook member, add OER Daily to your profile to receive a new-featured item from the OER Commons site every day.

Facebook members can find the OER Daily application at:

<http://apps.facebook.com/oercdaily>

To add OER Daily to your profile, click the link "GRAB THIS APP!"

For More Information

The following resources have been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

What is OER

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_content
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_educational_resources
- http://www.unesco.org/iiep/eng/focus/opensrc/opensrc_1.htm
- <http://www.hewlett.org/Programs/Education/OER/openEdResources.htm>

About OER Commons

- <http://www.oercommons.org/about>

In this module, some OER basics were presented and opportunities were provided to help you get started using OER Commons. In the next module, “[Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#),” will cover finding OER materials you can start using right now in your teaching and learning.

OER Commons Links

For more information about OER Commons, send an email to info@oercommons.org.

Use [this feedback form](#) to send OER Commons general feedback, a feature request, or information about a bug/problem you had using the site.

To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

“Quotable Quote”

For all information’s independence and extent, it is people, in their communities, organizations, and institutions, who ultimately decide what it all means and why it matters[[footnote](#)].

Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (2002). *The social life of information*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

About This Module

The "How Tos" of OER Commons is a set of learning modules evolving out of the development of OER Commons (<http://www.oercommons.org>), a teaching and learning network for free-to-use educational materials from around the world, created and licensed by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.

Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now

If you completed the module “[Why OER?](#),” you should now have an OER Commons account. Perhaps you also posted and read discussions in the forum [How and Why of OER](#).

The objective of this module is to show the many ways you can quickly and easily find materials in OER Commons. One of the early challenges in locating high-quality teaching and learning materials was the time it took to search a variety of sites. OER Commons solved that problem by providing a single point of access through which educators, students, and all learners can search, browse, evaluate, download, and discuss OER that are freely available online.

This module, “Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now,” is activity-based. Let’s jump into the collection of materials and find something you can start using in your teaching and learning.

Finding Materials

If you haven’t logged in already, [login](#) to OER Commons. The advantage to logging in is that you can save your search for future use and re-use.

To locate materials in OER Commons you can search or browse. There are two ways to search and four ways to browse.

Searching

You can do a [simple keyword search](#) using the search box located in the upper right corner of every page.

The second way to search is to use the [advanced search](#), which provides a wide variety of options for refining your search. In the “Find results by Keyword” box, search for an item using a keyword and refine your search using any combination of over 70 filtering criteria.

Searches can be saved by clicking the “Save This Search” button located on every search results page. Saved searches are placed in your portfolio. We’ll be talking more about your [OER Portfolio](#) in another module.

Too many results?

If you want to narrow the number of items listed on your search results page, you can filter the results. Using one or more of the 70 filtering criteria, you can narrow your search to find exactly what you are looking for. The “Filter Results” button is located on every search results page.

Want more results?

Try a different keyword or use one of the following methods to get a different results listing of OER materials.

Browsing

The predefined classifications in OER Commons provide an easy entry into browsing through OER materials.

Browsing the OER Top Ten: located in the middle of the OER Commons homepage. There are four categories: Featured, Most Popular, Highest Rated, and New. These are updated regularly, so visit the OER Top Ten often!

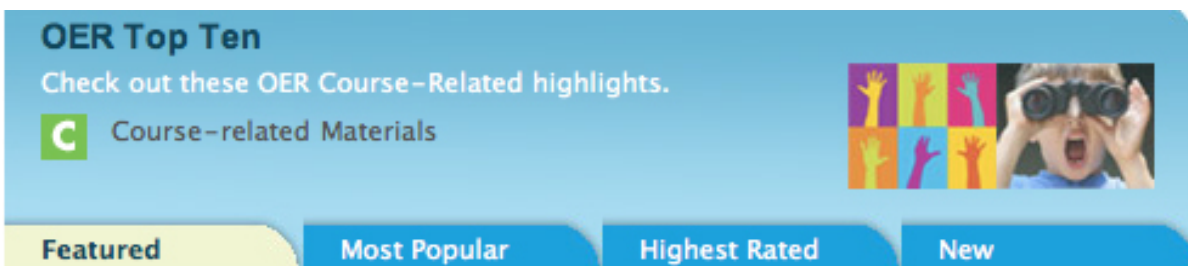


Figure 1. Visual representation of “OER Top Ten.”

Browsing by Subject Area or Grade Level: located on the left side of the OER Commons homepage under the heading “Choose OER By.” Click on one of the subject areas or grade levels to begin browsing.

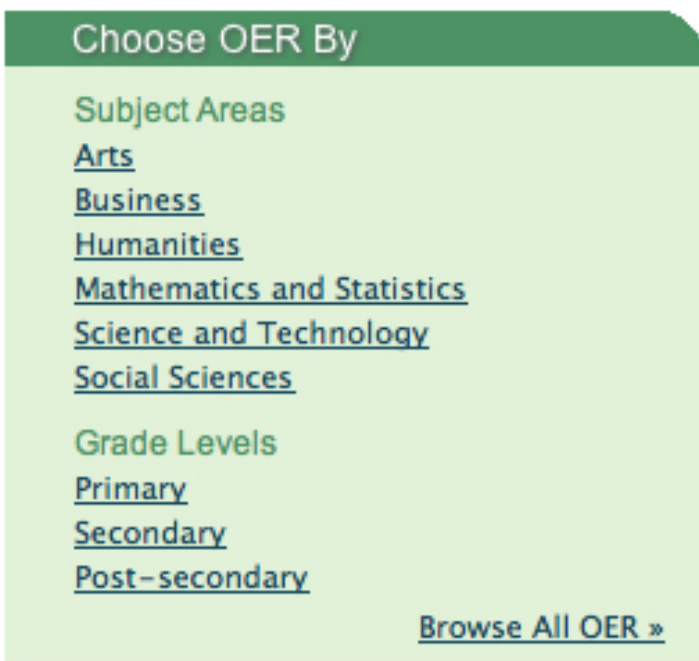


Figure 2. Visual representation of “Choose OER By.”

Browsing by Course-Related Materials or Libraries and Collections: located in [OER Teaching and Learning Materials](#). You can also browse by subject areas as well as grade level.

Under the heading “Course-Related Materials,” there are three categories:

1. Full Course—to see all or part of a course
2. Learning Modules—to see a portion of a course
3. OpenCourseWare—to see all materials in MIT’s OCW Consortium.

At a glance, you can see how many items are in each category. The number in parentheses shows the quantity of OER items for that category. If, for

example, you don't have time to browse hundreds or thousands of OER items, filter your search after you click on the category.

If you are looking for a specific instructional component such as a simulation or a video lecture, course-related materials are also categorized by 16 different instructional components. Clicking on any one of these components will display a listing of all the items for that particular instructional component.

Under the heading "Libraries and Collections," you will find digitized primary sources from a wide variety of digital media collections and libraries.

You can also browse each [individual content provider's](#) collection for either the Course-Related Materials or the Libraries and Collections.

Browsing by Tags

Tags are keywords you associate with an OER item. Tags are a way for you to personalize/categorize OER items. OER Commons provides pre-set categories; tags are the way for you to create your own categories. [Read more on tags.](#)

Top 30 Tags: located on the right side of the OER Commons homepage.

The results page lists other tags related to the one you chose.

TagCloud: located on the right side of the [OER Commons homepage](#). The "[TagCloud](#)" page lists all the tags in OER Commons.

The size of a word indicates its popularity.

Activity: Find Materials

Using one or more of the searching or browsing methods, locate materials you can begin using in your teaching or learning. After finding an item you can use, save it by clicking the "Save Item" link located under the title. (See Figure 3.)

Float a Boat



Figure 3. Visual representation of an OER item with the “Save Item” link.

When you save this item, it goes into your portfolio. We’ll be talking more about your [OER Portfolio](#) in another module.

Activity: Share Your Experience

In the OER Commons discussion “[How and Why of OER](#),” post your stories, suggestions, and questions with using OER in your teaching and learning. Here are some questions to consider in your post:

1. What was a surprising find as you searched for materials?
2. What frustrations have you encountered while searching for materials?
3. What are your top three or four wishes in how an OER site should be designed?

For More Information

The following resource has been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

- Help with searching OER Commons:
<http://www.oercommons.org/help/help-with-searching>

Other modules in this course include ...

- [Why OER?](#)
- [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)
- [My OER Portfolio](#)
- [Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)
- [OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#)

- [What is Localization?](#)
- [Students and OER](#)
- [What are Open Textbooks?](#)
- OER Case Study
- [Glossary](#)

This module showed how quickly you can find OER materials. The next module, “[Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#),” will show how you can start contributing to OER Commons by tagging, rating, and reviewing the materials you have used.

OER Commons Links

For more information about OER Commons, send an email to info@oercommons.org.

Use [this feedback form](#) to send OER Commons general feedback, a feature request, or information about a bug/problem you had using the site.

To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

“Quotable Quote”

When information is identified as meaningful, it is a force for change.
[\[footnote\]](#)

Wheatley, M. J., (1999). *Leadership and the New Science*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

About This Module

The "How Tos" of OER Commons is a set of learning modules evolving out of the development of OER Commons (<http://www.oercommons.org>), a teaching and learning network for free-to-use educational materials from

around the world, created and licensed by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.

Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials

The module “[Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#),” showed how quickly you can find OER materials. In this module, “Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials,” we’ll talk about ways you can begin contributing to OER Commons by using tags as well as rating and reviewing materials.

The What, Why, and How of Tags

In general, **tags** classify content the way **you** want to organize it. Tags are dynamic and created by the people who use a site as opposed to being a pre-defined set of keywords created by the owners of the site. So, a tag is a keyword created by a person who uses a site. Some examples of sites that use tagging are:

- [Flickr](#), for sharing photos
- [YouTube](#) for sharing videos
- [del.icio.us](#) for sharing bookmarks
- [OER Commons](#) for sharing instructional materials.

What all these sites have in common are people sharing content in an open community setting. To keep track of their own and others’ content, users classify content of interest by using tags.

The creation of tags give users of a site the ability to participate in classifying and organizing content the way they want to. Because tags come from the people who use the site, tagging is considered a **bottom up** classification scheme as opposed to **top down** (an existing pre-defined set of keywords from the site’s administrators).

OER Commons uses a bottom up classification scheme as well as a top down one. The bottom up classification scheme (tags) enables you to create and assign keywords, making them immediately searchable. In the top down classification scheme, keywords are created and assigned by the site’s administrators (in this case, OER Commons). The benefit to bottom up is that it gives users the flexibility to create their own way to classify the

materials; top down provides a standardized set of keywords. To learn more, read [The Hive Mind: Folksonomies and User-Based Tagging](#).

Tagging items is one of the ways to become an active contributor in the open source movement, which is defined as a distributed, participatory, and collaborative environment. Why would you want to actively participate in OER Commons? With so many ways to teach and learn, your perspective lends a unique dimension to OER. Others can learn from your OER process.

When you create tags, you are sharing the way you classify items, which can be useful to others who are searching for the items.

Here's one example of how tagging can help you as an educator or learner:

One person using a lesson plan about the Spanish influenza of 1918 might assign a tag such as flu, while another might assign a tag such as pandemic. Once assigned by users, tags are tied to the given resource, and become a searchable way to find that resource as well as other resources that are tagged or associated with the same labels. These new tags provide additional context for the item and help make it more findable. Your perspectives give others a new lens into seeing the content from a different angle and in turn, may give new ideas on how to use (or re-use) it.

On the [OER Commons homepage](#), the “Top 30 Tags” are located on the right side of the page. (See Figure 1.) Clicking on any tag displays a results page with OER items tagged with that particular keyword. To view all available tags in OER Commons, click on the “View all tags” link located in the Top 30 Tags box. Viewing all tags shows the collection of all tags on a site, which is called a “**TagCloud**.” The size of the word indicates its popularity. For a visual example of OER Commons’ TagCloud, see Figure 2.



Figure 1. A visual representation of the Top 30 Tags in OER Commons. This list changes; when you view it, different tags may be shown.



Figure 2. A visual representation of OER Common's TagCloud. This list also changes as people add more tags. And as more people use a particular tag, its font size increases.

Tags and Metadata

Metadata is data that provides information about other data. When you [submit your materials](#) to OER Commons, you provide information in the submission form such as the title, author name, type of material, keywords, and tags. This information becomes attached to that material. This information is called metadata. When someone conducts a search, the search engine uses the metadata to find and retrieve the material.

Additionally, when you provide information about others' materials by rating, reviewing, and tagging the material, you are providing metadata that becomes attached to that material.

The metadata you provide in your own materials as well as the information you provide by tagging, rating, and reviewing of others' materials enriches the content by giving descriptive information that assists in searching and re-use of the materials.

[Read more](#) about how OER Commons uses metadata for searching.

Activity: Tag an OER item

1. Go to [OER Commons](#). You must be logged in to do this activity.
2. Locate any OER item by searching with a keyword or clicking on a tag.
3. After finding an OER item, click on its title. You should see a page similar to the one in Figure 3.
4. Locate "Tags for This Item" on the right side of the window. (See an example in Figure 3.) Click on "Add Tags."
5. The page "Add Tags" appears. Add your own tag or select a tag from the list below. Each tag should be on its own line.(Figure 4.)
6. When you're done, click the "Save" button.
7. Your tag(s) will then appear in "Tags for this Item."



Figure 3. A visual representation of the area where you add tags. When you tag an item, others will see the tag when they view the item.

Add Tags to "Climate Change"

Your Tags

Put each tag on its own line

Climate Change
Climate Change Exchange
Greenhouse Effect
Water Cycle

SAVE

CANCEL

Other Tags

Click on tag to add it to your tags

[2.0](#) [20th Century](#) [3d Triangle](#) [AP](#) [Adult Ed](#) [Africa](#) [Algebra](#) [America](#) [Apc](#)
[Archaeobacteria](#) [Archaeology](#) [Archive](#) [Art](#) [Arts And Disabilities](#) [Asia](#)
[Atmosphere](#) [Atmospheric Science](#) [Bacterial Significance](#) [Basin Landforms](#)
[Behavior](#) [Billy the Kid](#) [Biochemistry](#) [Biology](#) [Biology Animal Classification](#)
[Biostatistics](#) [Bird](#) [Bird Observation](#) [Black Power](#) [Books](#) [Brain Anatomy](#)
[Calculus](#) [Carbon Cycle](#) [Case Studies](#) [Chemical & Physical Change](#) [Chemistry](#)
[Chemosynthesis](#) [Chinese](#) [Civil Engineering](#) [Civil Society](#) [Classification of Matter](#)
[Classroom Environment](#) [Codex](#) [Cognition](#) [Cognitive](#) [Collage](#) [Columbus](#)

Figure 4. A visual representation of an example of the "Add Tags" page.

OER stories from around the world

[A music teacher](#) tags material she found to give it more meaningful context.

[Coming full circle](#) with the OER process: 2 chemistry teachers use the same activity.

Your experience using open and freely shared course-related materials is valuable in the reuse and evolution of the materials. [Tell us your story](#); how you've used these materials and how their use has impacted how you teach or learn.

Rating Provides a Lens

After using an item in OER Commons, consider sharing your experience by rating it. When you rate items you have used, your rating information becomes attached to the item and provides another lens for others as they make decisions to use it.

Activity: Rate an OER item

1. Go to [OER Commons](#). You must be logged in to do this activity.
2. Locate any OER item by searching with a keyword or clicking on a tag.
3. After finding an OER item, click on its title. You should see a page similar to the one in Figure 3.
4. Click on the link "Rate Item."
5. A drop down menu appears.
6. Rate the item by choosing a number.

Items that you rate are attached to the item as well as being placed in "My OER Portfolio." [Learn more](#) about "My OER Portfolio."

Reviewing Provides Even More Understanding

Just as rating an OER item contributes to the richness of its information, reviewing it provides even more understanding. There are 3 categories on the Review Form:

- Use
- Overall Quality
- Usefulness and Recommendations for Future Use.

Each category asks questions that help to provide a deeper understanding of how the material can be used. Your feedback gives others ideas on how they might implement the OER item.

Activity: Review an OER item

1. Go to [OER Commons](#). You must be logged in to do this activity.
2. Locate any OER item by searching with a keyword or clicking on a tag.
3. After finding an OER item, click on its title. You should see a page similar to the one in Figure 3.
4. Under the title, click on the link “Review Item.”
5. The page “Add Review” appears.
6. Review the item by completing this form as appropriate.
7. Click the “Save” button.

Your reviews are attached to the item as well as being placed in “My OER Portfolio.” [Learn more](#) about “My OER Portfolio.”

For More Information

The following resources have been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

- Tagging (metadata): http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tag_%28metadata%29
- Metadata: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metadata>
- TagClouds: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tagcloud>

- Social bookmarking:
<http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ELI7001.pdf>

Other modules in this course include ...

- [Why OER?](#)
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- OER Case Study
- [Glossary](#)

This module showed how you can begin contributing to OER Commons by tagging, rating, and reviewing materials you have used. The next module, “[My OER Portfolio](#),” will show how using your OER Portfolio personalizes your use of OER Commons and gives you quick access to materials you have saved.

OER Commons Links

For more information about OER Commons, send an email to info@oercommons.org.

Use [this feedback form](#) to send OER Commons general feedback, a feature request, or information about a bug/problem you had using the site.

To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

“Quotable Quote”

The form in which information is coded has, itself, an inescapable bias.

[\[footnote\]](#)

Postman, N. (1988). *Conscientious Objections*. New York: Vintage Books.

About This Module

The "How Tos" of OER Commons is a set of learning modules evolving out of the development of OER Commons (<http://www.oercommons.org>), a teaching and learning network for free-to-use educational materials from around the world, created and licensed by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.

My OER Portfolio

The module “[Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)” showed how you can begin contributing to OER Commons by using tags as well as rating and reviewing materials. This module, “My OER Portfolio,” explains how the OER Portfolio can maximize your experience in using OER Commons.

What is My OER Portfolio?

When you [register for a free account](#) at OER Commons, a portfolio and profile is automatically created. Every time you save a search, add tags, ratings, reviews, comments, or submit your own instructional materials to OER Commons, these items are stored in your portfolio. You can quickly access all these items by clicking on the My OER Portfolio link located on the top of any OER Commons page.

Having a portfolio and profile in OER Commons can stimulate collaboration among educators and learners within and across disciplines.

The advantages to using your portfolio is that it:

- personalizes your OER Commons experience
- provides quick access to your most important OER materials
- manages all your OER Commons items in one place
- provides a history of your OER Commons activity
- makes it possible to share your OER items with others

Activity: Adding an OER saved search to your portfolio

1. Go to [OER Commons](#). You must be logged in to do this activity.
2. Locate any OER item by searching with a keyword or clicking on a tag.
3. On the results page, click the “Save This Search” button.
4. This search is now saved in your portfolio.
5. Go to your portfolio to view your saved search.

Activity: Saving an OER item in your portfolio

1. Go to [OER Commons](#). You must be logged in to do this activity.
2. Locate any OER item by searching with a keyword or clicking on a tag.
3. The results page appears with a listing of materials. Click on a title.
4. Under the title click the link “Save Item.”
5. The item is now saved in your portfolio.
6. Go to your portfolio to view the saved item.

Activity: Saving tags, ratings, and reviews to your portfolio

Go to the module [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#) to learn how to create tags, ratings, and reviews, which are automatically saved to your portfolio as they are created.

Activity: Saving notes to your portfolio

1. Go to [OER Commons](#). You must be logged in to do this activity.
2. Locate any OER item by searching with a keyword or clicking on a tag.
3. The results page appears with a listing of materials. Click on a title.
4. Under the title click the link “My Notes.”
5. Create a note in the notes field, then click the “Save” button.
6. The note is now saved in your portfolio.
7. Go to your portfolio to view the saved note.

Searching your portfolio

You can search for items that exist only in your portfolio. You must be inside your portfolio to access this search feature.

Navigating within your portfolio

You can quickly jump to different items in your portfolio by using the navigation located in your portfolio on the left side of your screen. See Figure 1 for a visual representation of the portfolio navigation.

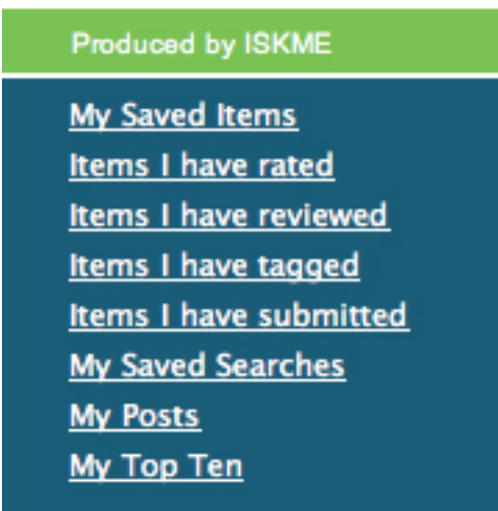


Figure 1. Visual representation of the portfolio navigation.

If you have several items in your portfolio, there may be more than one page in your portfolio. To navigate to other pages, either click on a number or the back or forward arrows. These are located in the navigation bar on top and below all the items in your portfolio. See Figure 2 for a visual representation of this navigation bar.

Brackets surrounding a number indicate the page you are on. Figure 2 shows, e.g., that you are on page 2 of your portfolio with a total number of 36 pages. Notice the small arrows on the left and right ends of the bar. Clicking on the right arrow will take you to the next page while the left arrow will take you to the preceding page.

This navigation bar is present through all of OER Commons, not just in your portfolio.

Figure 2. Visual representation of the navigation bar for browsing through pages in your portfolio.

Shared Portfolios

When your portfolio is created, by default it is a shared portfolio. Viewing shared portfolios shows what others have in their portfolio. Shared portfolios assist in knowledge sharing; you can see how others are actively engaging with OER. The concept of sharing portfolios is the foundation of the open educational resource movement: it is one of many avenues for providing access to teaching and learning materials by exchanging content for others to use and re-use.

Activity: Access OER Commons Shared Portfolios

1. Click on [OER Matters](#) located on the top of any OER Commons page.
2. On the left side of the screen, click on the [Shared Portfolios](#) link.

For easier access to the hundreds of portfolios, rearrange the number of results per page. If you choose “100 per page” on the drop down menu, you will have fewer pages to navigate through. Be sure to click the “Rearrange” button after you change the number of items to view per page.

Your OER profile

After creating a free account in OER Commons, you can edit your profile. There are 2 different ways to access your profile:

1. [Log in to your account](#) at OER Commons.
2. A page confirming you have logged in appears.
3. Click on the link “Member Profile” to edit your profile.

4. Edit/update your information as needed.
5. Click the "Save" button.

On the Edit OER Member page, you can set your profile or portfolio to a private setting. Our recommendation is to keep both settings public. OER Commons' mission is to expand educational opportunities by increasing access to high-quality Open Educational Resources (OER), and facilitating the creation, use, and re-use of OER, for instructors, students, and self-learners. By keeping your portfolio public, you become a link in the chain of the OER movement.

The second way to access your profile page is to click on the "My Profile" link near the upper right corner of any OER Commons page. See Figure 3 for a visual representation.



Figure 3. Visual representation of where to find the "My Profile" link.

Activity: Share Your Experience

In the OER Commons discussion "[How and Why of OER](#)," post your stories, suggestions, and questions with using OER in your teaching and learning. Here are a few questions to consider in your post:

1. Share 2 or 3 ways you have used your OER Portfolio in teaching or learning.
2. What kind of functionality would like to have in your portfolio?
3. How has [Shared Portfolios](#) impacted your OER experience?

For More Information

The following resources have been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

My OER Portfolio: <http://www.oercommons.org/help/learn-more-about/my-oer-portfolio>

Shared Portfolios: <http://www.oercommons.org/matters/share>

Other modules in this course include ...

- [Why OER?](#)
- [Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#)
- [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)
- [Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)
- [OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#)
- [What is Localization?](#)
- [Students and OER](#)
- [What are Open Textbooks?](#)
- OER Case Study
- [Glossary](#)

This module showed how the OER Portfolio can maximize your experience in OER Commons by personalizing your use and getting quick access to your most important OER materials. The next module, “[Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#),” will show how to submit your own content items or links to items about the field of open education to OER Commons.

OER Commons Links

For more information about OER Commons, send an email to info@oercommons.org.

Use [this feedback form](#) to send OER Commons general feedback, a feature request, or information about a bug/problem you had using the site.

To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

“Quotable Quote”

We store information with other people.[\[footnote\]](#)

Gladwell, M. (2002). *The Tipping Point*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

About This Module

The "How Tos" of OER Commons is a set of learning modules evolving out of the development of OER Commons (<http://www.oercommons.org>), a teaching and learning network for free-to-use educational materials from around the world, created and licensed by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.

Submitting Materials to OER Commons

The module “[My OER Portfolio](#)” showed how the OER Portfolio can maximize your experience using OER Commons. This module, “Submitting Materials to OER Commons,” explains how to submit your own content items or links to items about the field of open education to OER Commons.

Submitting Your Materials to OER Commons

The module “[Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing](#)” showed how you can contribute to the community of OER Commons members by giving feedback to pre-existing OER. When you create new tags, or rate and review materials you have used, others benefit from the ideas you bring to the OER item. Your perspectives shed light into new ways of using the OER.

This module takes contribution to a new level of participation: by submitting your own educational materials. The type of materials you submit can vary—from a class syllabus, activities, or assessment to news articles, conference information, and wikis. What all these resource items have in common are that they support teaching and learning. In this module I’ll be showing a few examples to give you an idea of the wide range of materials available in OER Commons.

To get your materials into OER Commons, you’ll use a submission form. The names of the four OER Commons submission forms are listed below; these forms also identify the content categories you can submit to OER Commons:

1. Submit your Course Materials (e.g., course-related educational materials)
2. Submit Your Library or Collection (e.g., resources from digital media collections and libraries of digitized primary sources)
3. Submit OER Matters (e.g., resources about the emerging field of open content and open educational resources)

4. Recommend new OER materials (e.g., any OER providers and materials).

[OER Matters](#) is where the process of submitting materials begins for each of the four submission forms mentioned above. Each form follows a similar process. In this module, I will give a description for the first form “Submit your Course Materials.” For the other forms, I will describe what is different.

Why submit your materials?

If you have used materials in OER Commons, that is one part of the OER process; sharing back your own teaching and learning materials continues the cycle and enriches others’ experience of finding useful materials.

Examples of materials submitted to OER Commons

The following links are just a small sample of the type of materials you can find in OER Commons:

[Introduction to Philosophy](#) (example of a course material submission)

This course is an introduction to philosophy for university students meeting the first of their philosophy course requirements. The course is intended to introduce philosophical questions, to shed light on how some of history's greatest philosophers have approached those questions, to help learners articulate philosophical concerns of their own and, most importantly, to learn how to address them. Among the areas of philosophy explored include ethics, political philosophy, metaphysics, and theory of knowledge.

[California Cultures](#) (example of a library collection submission)

This library collection documents California's rich history of diversity and multicultural contributions. The collection is from the University of California’s Calisphere collection and includes photographs, documents,

newspaper clippings, political cartoons, works of art, oral histories, and other primary sources draws from Calisphere's total content, and also features more than 20,000 specially digitized primary sources from special contributors.

[Conferences and Workshops](#) (example of one type of a OER Matters submission)

Conferences and Workshops is one example of an OER Matters topic. Other topics can be browsed from the [OER Matters](#) page. On the left side navigation, click on the topic you would like to browse (e.g., news, articles and reports, etc.)

By either conducting a quick search at OER Commons or browsing through the various OER collections, you will see that there is a large variety of teaching and learning materials available.

OER stories from around the world

[Two Kenyan teachers](#) collaborate and share their materials at OER Commons.

Your experience using open and freely shared course-related materials is valuable in the reuse and evolution of the materials. [Tell us your story](#); how you've used these materials and how their use has impacted how you teach or learn.

Submit your course-related materials

There are several examples of course-related materials listed on the [OER Categories page](#). Visit this page for ideas of the types of materials you can share with the OER Commons community. When you are ready to submit your own materials, here's how to do it:

1. Go to [OER Commons](#). You must be logged in to do this activity.

2. Click on the OER Matters link on the top of the page.
3. Click on the link Submit your Course Materials.

You can also click this link “[Submit Course-Related Materials](#)” to directly access this form.

Before submitting materials, you are asked to read, understand, and agree to the OER Commons [Conditions of Use](#). In the module “[OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#),” we talk in depth about how licensing works in OER Commons.

A small red box next to a field name indicates that it is mandatory field to complete. These mandatory fields must be completed for a successful submission. The information you provide in these fields gives descriptive information about the item you are submitting. This information is used to support the identification, description, and location of the item. It also provides the needed information for others to find your materials when using the search engine.

Most of the fields on the submission form are self-explanatory; e.g., title, author, abstract, etc. I’ll explain the fields that I anticipate where you might have questions.

URL Pointer: Provide the web address where your materials are stored. **OER Commons does not store your materials.** The URL you provide gives the direct link to where the materials are located.

New keywords: These are **tags** you create. Tags are author-created keywords. For more on tags, see the “[Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)” module. You can either create a new keyword (tag) or one that is provided using the existing keyword list.

Parent materials: The term **parent** refers to materials that are not your own. If the work you are submitting was modified from preexisting/parent materials, (e.g., you answered yes), then complete the following 2 fields “Parent Title” and “Parent URL.” Before including these materials, make sure their license allows the use/reuse of them. [Read more](#) about licensing.

Parent URL: Enter the URL where the preexisting materials exist.

Conditions of Use: Because the foundation of OER lies in the ability to freely use and reuse content, setting the conditions of use is extremely important in the OER process. The module “[OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#),” provides further information.

This section of the submission form offers 3 licenses to choose from:

1. Creative Commons
2. GNU Free Document
3. Custom/Other

Each type of license brings with it different legal restrictions and terms of use. You must be the copyright holder to license an original work. When creating derivative or modified works, you must abide by the restrictions of the license of the original work. The main intention for OER is to make materials usable for education and to provide alternatives to the restrictions of "All Rights Reserved". In addition, content released to the Public Domain can be used, shared, and modified without restrictions.

[Creative Commons](#) (CC) licenses enable copyright holders to grant some or all of their rights to the public by choosing among four differing licensing options, that in different combinations, produce [six licenses](#). The four options are named: Attribution, Share Alike, NonCommercial, and NoDerivatives. The licenses are being localized so that they may be applied on a per-country basis. The main intention is to allow creators of works to be able to set the terms of use themselves, without needing an attorney, and to avoid problems that copyright laws create around sharing and modifying works.

CC licenses provide a technical solution using RDF/XML metadata that describes the license and the work, making it easier to automatically process and locate licensed works. CC supplies the code on their web site for a licensor to add to their work.

In OER Commons, the most current version of the CC license is the top-level choice. To choose this option, click the radio button next to “Creative

Commons Licenses 3.0.” Next, click the link “Choose” under the CC license option. You will be walked through a series of questions to help you determine the type of CC license you want to use.

You can choose other CC licenses besides the most current one. By clicking the + icon next to “show/hide other Creative Commons licenses,” an expanded list is opened for you to choose the one you want. Read more about [Creative Commons licensing](#).

[GNU Free Document license](#) is another way to license your work for others to use. The GNU Free Documentation License (GNU FDL or simply GFDL) has been designed by the [Free Software Foundation](#) (FSF). The GFDL was intended for manuals, textbooks, other reference and instructional materials, and documentation for GNU and open source software. However, it can be used for any text-based work of any subject matter. For example, Wikipedia uses the GFDL for all of its text.

The GFDL license grants rights to readers and users of materials to copy, share, redistribute and modify a work. It requires all copies and derivatives to be available under the same license. Copies may also be sold commercially. There are specific requirements for modifying works involving crediting the creator of the work and for distributing large numbers of copies.

Custom/Other: Custom License is used to describe the terms granted and restrictions imposed by the copyright holder for a work covered by copyright in order to provide a clear alternative to “All Rights Reserved.” It simply allows the creator of a work to state conditions for which educators and learners may view, use, share, re-distribute, or modify a work. Allowing “use for educational purposes only,” for example, grants a reader or user of a work the opportunity to use it in a classroom or for personal learning or research purposes without needing to ask permission or pay a fee. Permission to alter a work may be prohibited or not, and the conditions may be specifically described. Commercial use may also be prohibited and can specifically be stated as such.

Non-compatibility of Licenses

The differing requirements and restrictions of Creative Commons (CC), GNU Free Documentation License (GFDL) and Custom-licensed or Copyrighted (All Rights Reserved) materials, make these licenses incompatible with each other. Combining content across license type is still a legal and technical obstacle for creating thoroughly remixable content.

More may be learned on this subject at the entry for “[Free Content](#)” in Wikipedia, where you can find many links on the legal and philosophical distinctions around licensing content.

Final Step in Submitting Material in OER Commons

After identifying the license/copyright holder’s name, by clicking the “Save” button, your submission is sent to the OER Commons Team.

To learn more about OER Conditions of Use, please refer to the module “[OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#).”

Submit library or collection

Items in the OER Commons [Libraries and Collections](#) are resources from digital media collections and libraries of digitized primary sources. These resources are from primary sources, special collections of pedagogical materials, and other tools, texts, and reference-based web sites that are useful for teaching and learning.

Here are two examples from Libraries and Collections:

- [Making Decisions](#) (from the OpenLearn/Open University collection).
- [Case Studies in Terrorism Response](#) (from the JHSPH OpenCourseWare collection).

The “[Submit Library or Collection](#)” form is similar to the one for submitting course-related materials. The only difference is you are not asked whether the work was modified from preexisting/parent materials.

Follow the instructions in the section “Submit your course-related materials.”

Submit OER Matters content

The types of items collected in [OER Matters](#) are items such as: news, articles, reports, new tools, technologies, wiki spaces, blog posts, upcoming conferences, and discussions from other sites around the web. To see examples of OER Matters items, go to the [OER Matters](#) page and click on each topic name to browse items by topics.

By submitting the above-mentioned types of items to OER Matters, you can promote the work you are involved in, such as wiki, blogs, or conferences to the OER Commons community.

Just like the other submission forms, many of the questions on the “[Submit OER Matters Content](#)” form are self-explanatory. I’ll explain the fields where I anticipate you might have questions. This form differs from the others—there is more than one page. By clicking the “Next” button as you complete each page, you will be given the opportunity to rate, comment, create tags, and notes for this material.

Content Types: There are seven OER Matters content types:

1. News Stories
2. Articles and Reports
3. Tools and Technology
4. Organizations and Associations
5. Conferences and Workshops
6. Discussion Forums
7. Blogs and Wikis

You can choose more than one content type. For example, if your content is a news story and is on a blog or wiki, choose both by clicking in the selection box next to each content type.

Content Topics: There are nine OER Matters content topics. They are listed below with a short description:

1. How and Why of OER: The challenges and potential impact of OER.
2. Teaching and Learning: The impact of OER for educators and learners.
3. Localization: The process through which educational resources are adapted to meet local teaching and learning needs.
4. Standards/Certifications: The alignment of curriculum standards to OER.
5. Intellectual Property: Legal issues surrounding the sharing, use, and re-use of OER.
6. Open Source: A movement, its activities, and concepts associated with the collaborative creation of freely available software source code.
7. Technology: The latest innovations in and roles of OER-related technologies.
8. Research: Models, methodologies, paradigms, and theories in the OER research community.
9. Policy: Infrastructure, funding, stakeholders, accessibility, and other support mechanisms that sustain and grow OER.

Just like content type, you can choose more than one topic.

Content Creation Date: There are drop down menus to choose (in this order from left to right) year, month, day, hour, minute.

After completing the rest of this form, click the “Next” button. This takes you to a form to rate the material you are submitting. All of your information is automatically saved when you click “Next.”

There is a succession of pages with short forms; you reach each next page by clicking the “Next” button. On each “next” page you can add comments, keywords and/or tags, and notes. Click the “Save” button to submit your OER Matters content.

Recommend new OER

Complete the [Recommend New OER form](#) if you would like to recommend either Course-Related or Libraries and Collections OER. Using this form helps the OER Commons team become aware of more OER providers and materials to include in OER Commons. This in turn helps educators and learners connect with even more teaching and learning material.

OER Commons submission policy

The OER Commons Team reviews data contributed through the use of the forms mentioned above, but does not guarantee the accuracy of data submitted to us by others. Our policy requires that users submit only material that they own, have permission to use, and properly attribute. Consistent with this policy, we would remove items from our database found to be in violation of the rights and conditions of use for those materials.

Activity: Submitting OER material

Choose materials to submit to OER Commons. Click on the appropriate link and submit your materials using the submission form:

1. [Submit your Course Materials](#)
2. [Submit Your Library or Collection](#)
3. [Submit OER Matters](#)
4. [Recommend new OER materials](#)

Activity: Share Your Experience

In the OER Commons discussion “[How and Why of OER](#),” post your stories, suggestions, and questions with using OER in your teaching and learning. Here are a few questions to consider in your post:

1. What do you feel are the benefits of sharing OER?
2. What issues have you encountered in sharing OER?
3. How has sharing OER changed the way you work?

4. If you have not shared your own materials, what keeps you from sharing?

For More Information

The following resources have been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

- OER Commons Matters: <http://www.oercommons.org/matters>
- OER Commons Conditions of Use: <http://www.oercommons.org/help/learn-more-about/conditions-of-use>

Other modules in this course include ...

- [Why OER?](#)
- [Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#)
- [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)
- [My OER Portfolio](#)
- [OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#)
- [What is Localization?](#)
- [Students and OER](#)
- [What are Open Textbooks?](#)
- OER Case Study
- [Glossary](#)

This module showed how to submit your own content items or links to items about the field of open education to OER Commons. The next module, “[OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#),” will give an overview of the licensing and conditions of use in OER Commons as well as a general overview of licensing for OER.

OER Commons Links

For more information about OER Commons, send an email to info@oercommons.org.

Use [this feedback form](#) to send OER Commons general feedback, a feature request, or information about a bug/problem you had using the site.

To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

“Quotable Quote”

People with shared interests have organized around shared documents, while in turn such documents have helped develop new interests. [\[footnote\]](#)
Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (2002). *The social life of information*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

About This Module

The "How Tos" of OER Commons is a set of learning modules evolving out of the development of OER Commons (<http://www.oercommons.org>), a teaching and learning network for free-to-use educational materials from around the world, created and licensed by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.

OER Licensing and Conditions of Use

The module “[Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)” showed how to submit content items or links to items about the field of open education to OER Commons. This module, “OER Licensing and Conditions of Use,” will explain what authors need to know about licensing and conditions of use. It will also cover the licensing options in OER Commons.

What OER Authors Need to Know About Licensing

This module is intended to offer a general overview of the basics of licensing OER materials to assist you in using others’ materials as well as sharing your own. It will not cover the legalities of every aspect of intellectual property. Specifically, this module will cover the licensing options available in OER Commons as well as the conditions of use. The objective is to provide a basic understanding of licensing to help you make an informed choice as you both use and submit content to OER Commons. Here are a few scenarios to illustrate the types of material licensing issues an educator may face:

- You have created a set of Algebra materials and exercises and want to offer them for others to use, but want to make sure you receive attribution for your work.
- You have written a story of a boy who travels to Central America with his family for your geography students, and are willing to share it with other teachers, but don’t necessarily want your name attached to it.
- You have downloaded a useful exercise for your Wednesday afternoon science lab from an OER site, but aren’t sure if you can legally change it to meet your local needs.
- You found a photograph of lemurs online, but you aren’t certain if you have permission to insert it into your PowerPoint presentation on Madagascar that you are preparing.

The philosophy of OER is based on the idea of sharing and re-using content. Because the restrictions of traditional [copyright laws](#) are not appropriate for new media and the culture that has grown around it, legal experts in the field of new media have pioneered alternative legal

frameworks for sharing, reusing, and remixing content. [Creative Commons](#) has been in the forefront of this movement; their goal is “to build a layer of reasonable, flexible copyright in the face of increasingly restrictive default rules.”

For an overview of the limitations of the traditional copyright system, and how Creative Commons addresses these limitations, watch this short video called “[Get Creative](#).”

When you submit materials to OER Commons to share with others, you be asked to choose a license for your work. During the materials submission process, you will be presented with three licensing options to choose from:

1. Creative Commons
2. GNU Free Document
3. Custom/Other

This module will provide a description of each licensing option; however, because OER Commons recommends the use of Creative Commons licensing, this module will primarily focus on Creative Commons.

What is Creative Commons?

Creative Commons is a nonprofit organization that provides a free alternative to the restrictions of the traditional copyright laws. Offering several licensing options, authors have the flexibility to decide how they want others to use their materials. Watch this short video, “[Wanna Work Together?](#),” for an overview of why you would want to use Creative Commons licensing.

Using a Creative Commons license does not mean you are giving up rights to copyrighting your work. This [short overview](#) explains the four main licensing conditions and provides scenarios to illustrate how the licenses are used. To further understand Creative Commons licensing, read descriptions of the [six main licenses](#).

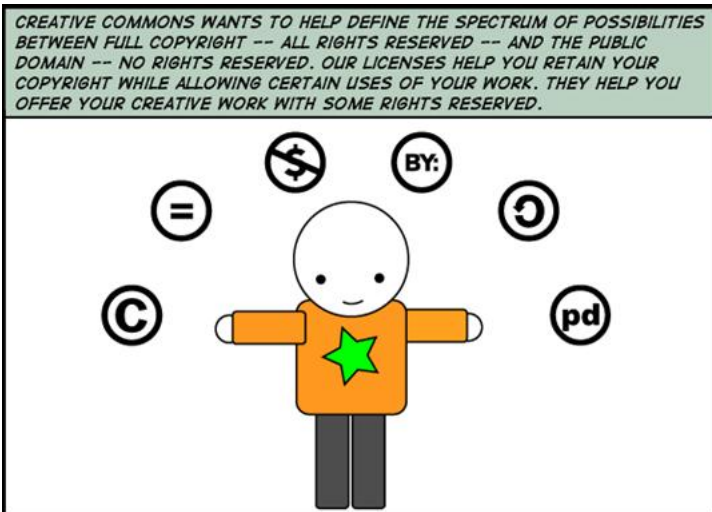


Figure 1: Creative Commons comic defining the spectrum of possibilities for copyrighting material. From: http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Spectrumofrights_Comic1

Before submitting your materials to OER Commons, and before deciding on a license, Creative Commons recommends you make sure that:


- a Creative Commons license can be applied to the type of work you want to license
- you understand how Creative Commons licenses operate
- you have the rights for the material
- you are specific about what you are licensing
- if you are a member of a collecting society, you are allowed to use a Creative Commons license.

[Read more](#) about what Creative Commons has to say about the above recommendations.

After ensuring you can use a Creative Commons license for your material, you are ready to take the next step in licensing it. During the process of submitting your material to OER Commons, you will be asked two questions to help determine which license is most appropriate for your needs. Figure 2 is a visual representation of the Creative Commons licensing form. You will see this form during the process of submitting your


material to OER Commons—it appears as a link on the OER Commons submission form.

Choose a License


CHOOSE A LICENSE
provided by [Creative Commons](#)


You've made a work you're proud of. Now it's time to get creative with how you make it available.

Creative Commons licenses help you share your work while keeping your copyright. Other people can copy and distribute your work provided they [give you credit](#) — and only on the conditions you specify here. This page helps you choose those conditions. If you want to offer your work with no conditions, choose the [public domain](#).


Allow commercial uses of your work? ([more info](#) )

☒ Yes

☐ No

Allow modifications of your work? ([more info](#) )

☒ Yes

☐ Yes, as long as others share alike ([more info](#) )

☐ No

[Select a License](#)

Note: To license a work, you must be its copyright holder or have express authorization from its copyright holder to do so.

Creative Commons does not provide legal advice or services. We provide form legal documents; the rest is up to you.

Figure 2. Visual representation of the form you will see when you complete the OER Commons submission form.

Look at [this example](#) to see how a Creative Commons license is displayed for an item in OER Commons. On this page you will see an icon that represents the chosen Creative Commons license as well as a link to the license. In this instance the author chose the [Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](#) license. Let's break down what each of these words mean:

- Attribution: You must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).
- Noncommercial: You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
- Share-Alike: If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under the same or similar license to this one.
- 3.0: the version of this license.
- Unported: the license has not been adapted for a local jurisdiction.

With this particular item, the author chose a license that allows others to copy, distribute, and transmit the work as well as **remix** it, which means you can adapt the work for your own use.

If you'd like more information about Creative Commons' Version 3 license, read a [brief explanation](#) by their General Counsel.

Using Others' Work

Before using someone else's material you found in OER Commons, check the material's licensing. This information can be found on the item's overview page in the section called "Conditions of Use." A link to the license is provided; the license will describe how the material's author has specified the way it can be used.

Sharing Your Work

Here is a recap of how to license material you created and want to share in OER Commons using a Creative Commons' license:

1. [Determine](#) whether you can use a Creative Commons license for your work.
2. If necessary, replace or remove content that you do not have permission to use. Or get permission from the author(s) who hold the copyright.
3. Login to OER Commons and click on [OER Matters](#). This will take you to the page where the submission forms are located.
4. Complete the submission form, and decide which Creative Commons license you would like to use. The top-level choice is the most current Creative Commons license. You can choose an older license by clicking on the + icon next to “show/hide other Creative Commons licenses.”
5. After you click the “Save” button on the bottom of the submission form, the license you chose will be attached to the material you submitted.

To see the item you submitted with the license you chose, go to your [OER Portfolio](#). You'll need to be logged into OER Commons to view your portfolio. Once you are in your portfolio, click the link called “Items I have submitted.” Find the name of the item you submitted and click on its link. Look under “Conditions of Use” to see your license.

GNU Free Document License

[GNU Free Document license](#) is another way to license your work for others to use. The GNU Free Documentation License (GNU FDL or simply GFDL) has been designed by the [Free Software Foundation](#) (FSF). The GFDL was intended for manuals, textbooks, other reference and instructional materials, and documentation for GNU and open source software. However, it can be used for any text-based work of any subject matter. For example, Wikipedia uses the GFDL for all of its text.

The GFDL license grants rights to readers and users of materials to copy, share, redistribute and modify a work. It requires all copies and derivatives to be available under the same license. Copies may also be sold commercially. There are specific requirements for modifying works involving crediting the creator of the work and for distributing large numbers of copies.

Here is [one example](#) of an item from OER Commons that uses the GNU Free Document license.

Custom/Other

Custom License is used to describe the terms granted and restrictions imposed by the copyright holder for a work covered by copyright in order to provide a clear alternative to “All Rights Reserved.” It simply allows the creator of a work to state conditions for which educators and learners may view, use, share, re-distribute, or modify a work. Allowing “use for educational purposes only,” for example, grants a reader or user of a work the opportunity to use it in a classroom or for personal learning or research purposes without needing to ask permission or pay a fee. Permission to alter a work may be prohibited or not, and the conditions may be specifically described. Commercial use may also be prohibited and can specifically be stated as such.

Non-compatibility of Licenses

The differing requirements and restrictions of Creative Commons (CC), GNU Free Documentation License (GFDL) and Custom-licensed or Copyrighted (All Rights Reserved) materials, make these licenses incompatible with each other. Combining content across license type is still a legal and technical obstacle for creating thoroughly remixable content.

OER Commons Conditions of Use

This section is from the [OER Commons' web site](#):

OER Commons encourages the use of the [Creative Commons](#) licenses to govern the use of OER, but does not require them. Creative Commons is a framework for institutions and authors to specify limitations and freedoms around use and reuse of resources, beyond traditional copyright.

OER Commons allows Content Providers to describe custom licensing agreements that cover their resources. Many resources may inherit legacy licensing and copyright arrangements. Although we seek to point to open and reusable content, OER Commons in no way promotes the use of materials outside the particular legal restrictions imposed by a resource author or provider.

A brief introduction from Creative Commons' Choosing a License is here:

Offering OER under a Creative Commons license “does not mean giving up your copyright. It means offering some of your rights to any member of the public but only on certain conditions. What conditions? [You can find an overview of the Creative Commons licenses here.](#)”

All of the Creative Commons licenses require that a user or reuser of a resource "give attribution in the manner specified by the author or licensor."

OER stories from around the world

Read [these three short stories](#) of how different people have used Creative Commons licensing for their work.

Your experience using open and freely shared course-related materials is valuable in the reuse and evolution of the materials. [Tell us your story](#); how you've used these materials and how their use has impacted how you teach or learn.

Activity: Share Your Experience

At the core of OER use and re-use are legal issues surrounding the sharing, use, and re-use of OER as a way to sustain and grow the OER movement.

In the OER Commons discussion “[Intellectual Property](#),” share your thoughts about this important issue. Here are a few questions to consider in your post:

1. How does the shift from proprietary to participatory impact OER?
2. How do current licenses serve the purpose of OER?
3. What does the concept of “open” mean to you? Which attributes of “openness” are most important to you?

For More Information

The following resource has been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

- Watch the video “[A Fair\(y\) Use Tale](#)”

Professor Eric Faden of Bucknell University provides this humorous, yet informative, review of copyright principles delivered through the words of the very folks we can thank for nearly endless copyright terms. From: <http://cyberlaw.stanford.edu/documentary-film-program/film/a-fair-y-use-tale>

Other modules in this course include ...

- [Why OER?](#)
- [Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#)
- [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)
- [My OER Portfolio](#)
- [Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)
- [What is Localization?](#)
- [Students and OER](#)
- [What are Open Textbooks?](#)
- OER Case Study
- [Glossary](#)

This module provided an overview of what authors need to know about licensing and conditions of use. We also talked about the licensing options

in OER Commons. The next module, “[What is Localization?](#),” will provide an overview of localization—making content context-specific.

OER Commons Links

For more information about OER Commons, send an email to info@oercommons.org.

Use [this feedback form](#) to send OER Commons general feedback, a feature request, or information about a bug/problem you had using the site.

To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

“Quotable Quote”

New media break up old knowledge monopolies; indeed, create new conceptions of knowledge, even new conceptions of politics.^{[[footnote](#)]}
Postman, N. (1988). *Conscientious Objections*. New York: Vintage Books.

About This Module

The "How Tos" of OER Commons is a set of learning modules evolving out of the development of OER Commons (<http://www.oercommons.org>), a teaching and learning network for free-to-use educational materials from around the world, created and licensed by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.

What is Localization?

The module “[OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#),” provided an overview of what authors need to know about licensing and conditions of use. We also talked about the licensing options in OER Commons. This module, “What is Localization?,” offers an overview of localization, which is about making content usable and adaptable to meet your local needs.

Localization and OER

In the context of OER, **localization** refers to the process of taking educational resources developed for one context and adapting them for other contexts. These contexts can, for example, be geographical, pedagogical, political, or technical. The practice of localization encompasses more than the translation of materials into a local language or swapping a photo to reflect a culture. Localization is at the heart of the OER process—it exemplifies diversity, openness, and reusability.

No matter where you live or what you teach, when you modify open and freely shared materials for your own use, you are localizing the materials. There are many reasons why educators and learners localize materials. Here are a few:

- To address a particular teaching style or learning style
- To adapt for a different grade level
- To adapt for a different discipline
- To adjust for a different learning environment
- To address diversity needs
- To address a cultural preference
- To support a specific pedagogical need
- To address either a school or a district’s standardized curriculum

What all these examples have in common is the ability to customize materials to meet unique teaching and learning needs. The OER process of localizing materials is an empowering activity: those using the materials can customize them the way **they want**. Materials found in an OER repository such as [OER Commons](#) are different from materials received

from a publisher. OER materials most often have [licenses for conditions of use](#) that make them customizable to meet local teaching and learning needs. Most publisher materials cannot be modified.

When you use materials found in an OER repository, modify them, and share back the modifications you made, you are practicing the OER process. You are both localizing the materials for your own needs as well as making them freely available to other educators and learners around the world. Sharing back the modifications you made furthers understanding of how the material was adapted.

OER stories from around the world

[Inga](#) is a community college teacher in Denmark looking for new ways to present a lesson about using patterns in graphic design.

[A lesson plan](#) travels across the world several times, being customized for each local teaching and learning need.

Your experience using open and freely shared course-related materials is valuable in the reuse and evolution of the materials. [Tell us your story](#); how you've used these materials and how their use has impacted how you teach or learn.

Creating original materials to share

As previously mentioned, localization is part of the OER process: it is the way for individuals to contribute their perspectives and contextual experiences within an educational resource. The materials you create and share are a valuable resource for others to use or build upon. These materials help extend OER into becoming both a scalable and sustainable practice.

While creating materials for your own educational use, it may be difficult to imagine how someone in a different circumstance in another part of the

world may want to use your material. However, if you keep the following tips in mind while you are creating these materials for sharing, it can assist in making the modification process easier for the next person who wants to customize them for their own use.

- **Document file format:** Create materials in the most flexible formats available. HTML is one of the most widely available formats—HTML documents can be viewed with any web browser and the files are easily modifiable. Another popular format for document creation is Microsoft Word. Because Microsoft Word is a commercial product, some people may not own this program. Instead of saving your material as a Word document (.doc format), save the Microsoft Word document as a text (.txt) file or a rich text format file (.rtf). Both .txt and .rtf formats can be opened with any word-processing program.
- **Design:** Keep the design of your materials simple. Following W3C's [10 Quick Tips to Make Accessible Web Sites](#), will help make your materials accessible to those with disabilities.
- **Share:** Make your materials easy to find by submitting them to an OER repository like OER Commons. This helps others find your materials because they can be searched by many factors, such as keywords, grade level, subject area, or type of material.
- **License:** License your materials using a [Creative Commons](#) license so others can use, re-use, or remix your work.

Activity: Localization Exercise

Locate educational materials from any OER repository site such as OER Commons and adapt them for your own use. Share them back. For information on how to submit your materials to OER Commons, read "[Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)."

Activity: Group Localization Exercise

This [localization activity](#) is from iCommons: The goal of this activity is to produce modified content that is adapted and suitable to a new purpose, situation or locale; to analyze and reflect upon the process and gain insights

into the challenges for practitioners, content developers, and framework/tool providers.

Activity: Share Your Experience

Participate in discussions about how open education content is localized and how the creation of OER facilitates or impedes making content be context-specific. In the OER Commons discussion “[Localization](#),” share your thoughts about this important issue. Here are a few questions to consider in your post:

1. What modifications did you make in the materials you used from an OER site? Did you share these modifications back? If not, why not?
2. How is content localized at the individual, school, cultural, and national level, and what are the benefits?
3. What considerations, constraints, and enablers exist in sharing, using and reusing my project's OER content in local teaching and learning situations?
4. Is localization only a process of adapting existing materials for local conditions? Or is it also a methodology for creating new materials?

For More Information

The following resources have been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

- Openness, Localization, and the Future of Learning Objects:
<http://opencontent.org/presentations/bcnet07>
- Overview of the OSS and OER in Education Series:
[http://wikieducator.org/Overview of the OSS and OER in Education Series](http://wikieducator.org/Overview_of_the_OSS_and_OER_in_Education_Series)
- OER’S, DL’s, Reuse and Culture:
<http://jargonyowords.wordpress.com/2006/12/16/questions-about-ocw>

Other modules in this course include ...

- [Why OER?](#)
- [Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#)
- [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)
- [My OER Portfolio](#)
- [Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)
- [OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#)
- [Students and OER](#)
- [What are Open Textbooks?](#)
- OER Case Study
- [Glossary](#)

This module offered an overview of localization—making content context-specific. The next module, “[Students and OER](#),” will present OER activities you can use with your students.

OER Commons Links

For more information about OER Commons, send an email to info@oercommons.org.

Use [this feedback form](#) to send OER Commons general feedback, a feature request, or information about a bug/problem you had using the site.

To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

“Quotable Quote”

Diversity promotes quality.[\[footnote\]](#)

Shneiderman, B. (2002). *Leonardo’s Laptop*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

About This Module

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teaching and learning network for free-to-use educational materials from around the world, created and licensed by the Institute for the Study of Knowledge Management in Education (ISKME).

Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.

Students and OER

This module provides ideas for how you can work with your students using OER.

The module, “[What is Localization?](#),” provided overview of localization—making content context-specific. This module, “Students and OER,” will present OER activities you can use with your students.

Students and OER

The OER process has the potential for supporting new instructional approaches in the classroom. These approaches become possible because the conditions that OER provides lend flexibility for sharing educational resources worldwide. These conditions are scaffolded by the variety of nonrestrictive licenses to choose from (see [OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#)) as well as the ability to access these resources through OER repositories. As educators integrate OER into their teaching, students benefit from exposure to a wider range of pedagogical expressions through the materials created by other educators and learners from all over the world. This diversity of pedagogical approaches and cultural perspectives is a foundational aspect of OER. The endless options that this diversity provides give educators and learners a springboard for integrating new ways of working in educational environments.

Students are not only impacted by the diversity of materials offered through OER. The OER process opens up possibilities for collaborations with other students as well as with their teachers in creating content. Here are a few ideas on how OER can benefit students:

- The activity of remixing content can provide new ways of looking at the subject which can open up dialogue between teacher and student and student to student. It can also help develop cognitive skills as well as computer skills.
- Using an OER repository as a portal for collaborative assignments can spark students working with each other within a local classroom as well as with students in schools in any part of the world.

- Teachers can guide students in the creation of content with the intent of submitting it to an OER repository. The act of sharing back content assists students in becoming participants of and not just consumers of content. Knowing that others will use their work instills a sense of ownership, pride, and a quest for creating high quality work.

OER stories from around the world

[Katrín's assignment](#) in her teacher training class is to use OER with her students.

[Students collaborate](#) on an English assignment to create a web-based magazine.

Your experience using open and freely shared course-related materials is valuable in the reuse and evolution of the materials. [Tell us your story](#); how you've used these materials and how their use has impacted how you teach or learn.

Integrating OER Into the Classroom

These links provide direct access to several course-related components available in [OER Commons](#). Consider using or remixing one or more of these components to either present to your students or as hands-on activity for your students to engage with the OER process.

Course-related Components in OER Commons	
Activities or labs	Syllabi
Homework and assignments	Lesson plans

<u>Textbooks</u>	<u>Lecture notes</u>
<u>Simulations</u>	<u>Audio lectures</u>
<u>Games</u>	<u>Video lectures</u>
<u>Assessments</u>	<u>Teaching and learning strategies</u>

The results list for all the course-related components can be refined using any combination of over 70 filtering criteria by clicking on the “Filter Results” button.

The OER process of use, modification, and sharing back can become part of an instructional approach you take with students. Not only can you customize openly sharable materials that you present to your students, but you can also facilitate the OER process with your students to help them become producers of content. The content your students create becomes part of their learning process as well as a representation of their learning.

Activity: Share Your Experience

We’re discussing the impact of OER in [Teaching and Learning](#) in OER Commons. Post your stories, suggestions, and questions with using OER materials in your teaching and learning. Here are a few questions to consider in your post:

1. Share some of your teaching strategies in how you have implemented OER with your students.
2. Describe how your students have used OER.
3. What have been your challenges in using OER with your students?
4. If you haven’t used OER with your students, what are the barriers?

For More Information

The following resources have been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

- Open Educational Resources: Toward a New Educational Paradigm: http://www.ijournal.us/issue_14/print_version/ij_14_04_articleprint_Petrides_Jimes.htm
- OER Categories: <http://www.oercommons.org/oer>

Other modules in this course include ...

- [Why OER?](#)
- [Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#)
- [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)
- [My OER Portfolio](#)
- [Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)
- [OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#)
- [What is Localization?](#)
- [What are Open Textbooks?](#)
- OER Case Study
- [Glossary](#)

This module presented OER activities you can use with your students. The next module, “[What are Open Textbooks?](#),” will provide an overview of open textbooks.

OER Commons Links

For more information about OER Commons, send an email to info@oercommons.org.

Use [this feedback form](#) to send OER Commons general feedback, a feature request, or information about a bug/problem you had using the site.

To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

“Quotable Quote”

Successful students create to learn, and learn to create.[\[footnote\]](#)

Shneiderman, B. (2002). *Leonardo's Laptop*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

About This Module

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Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.

What are Open Textbooks?

An overview of what open textbooks are, how they are created, and how you can participate.

The module “[Students and OER](#)” presented OER activities you can use with your students. This module, “What are Open Textbooks?,” provides an overview of open textbooks.

What are Open Textbooks?

An emerging development in OER is **open textbooks**, which are textbooks that are freely available with nonrestrictive licenses. Covering a wide range of disciplines, open textbooks are available to download and print in various file formats from several web sites and OER repositories. Open textbooks can range from public domain books to existing textbooks to textbooks created specifically for OER. Open textbooks help solve the problems of the high cost of textbooks, book shortages, and access to textbooks as well as providing the capacity to better meet local teaching and learning needs.

What do open textbooks look like?

There is a wide range of designs for open textbooks. The number of sites that provide access to them reflects the diversity of their design. Several file formats are often provided for open textbooks; typical formats are: HTML, Adobe PDF, and plain text. To download an open textbook, locate one from an OER repository or web site. The following list illustrates the vast landscape of sites that make open textbooks freely available. Go to one or more of these sites to locate an open textbook of interest to you:

- [Project Gutenberg](#) was the first producer of free electronic books. See their top 100 downloads: <http://www.gutenberg.org/browse/scores/top>.
- [Wikibooks](#) is a Wikimedia project started in 2003 with the mission to create a free collection of open-content textbooks that anyone can edit. Wikibooks provides [support for multiple languages](#).

- [Free High School Science Texts](#) (FHSST) was initiated by young South African scientists and now brings together volunteers from around the world who are willing to contribute to the writing of the books.
- [The California Open Source Textbook Project](#) (COSTP) is a collaborative, public/private undertaking. It has been created to address the high cost, content range, and consistent shortages of K-12 textbooks in California.
- [Open Book Project](#) is aimed at the educational community and seeks to encourage and coordinate collaboration among students and teachers for the development of high quality, freely distributable textbooks and educational materials on a wide range of topics.
- [Manybooks.net](#) provides free eBooks for PDAs, iPods, or eBook readers. Books are available in several languages.
- [The Assayer](#) provides a catalog of books whose authors have made them available for free.

Using open textbooks in teaching and learning

There are a number of advantages to adopting an open textbook over a traditional textbook. The ability to customize a text so that it is more closely aligned with one's teaching philosophy and pedagogical approach is a benefit to teachers. Students benefit from this as well; with targeted topics, activities, and assignments customized for their individual learning needs, the possibility of a higher engagement with the material is more likely than with a traditional textbook. The capacity to customize a text into discernable chunks offers a more personalized approach to learning.

The following table compares the capabilities of open and traditional textbooks.

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Open textbooks	Traditional textbooks
dynamic	static
modifiable/customizable	non-customizable
targeted in-depth material	generic material
timely	dated
personalized for local conditions	standardized content
addresses multiple learning styles	assumes a uniform learning style
free	costly

Read about a teacher's experience in adopting an open textbook: [No Books, No Problem: Teaching Without a Text](#).

Read about how an editor from a major publisher gives his [insider's perspective](#) of the inner workings of textbook publishing.

Read Monte Wolverton's [humorous look](#) at the textbook creation process (via Edutopia's web site).

See a list of ideas for [How-To: Toss the Text](#).

How are open textbooks created?

Here are two stories of how two different groups collaborated to produce open textbooks in a **peer production** environment.

A South African graduate student saw a need when a group of high school students told him they did not have a science textbook. This encounter led to a worldwide initiative called [Free High School Science Texts](#) that

provides free science and mathematics textbooks for Grades 10 to 12 science learners in South Africa.

An interested group of individuals started a Free Textbooks group during the 2007 [iCommons](http://commons.wikimedia.org/) Summit in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The group seeks to create a knowledge base to help educators worldwide develop Free Textbook projects. For more information, go to: [http://wikieducator.org/Free Textbooks](http://wikieducator.org/Free_Textbooks). Subscribe to their mailing list: <http://freeculture.org/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/freetextbooks>.

How can you participate?

Open textbook projects rely on volunteers who are committed to a vision of providing high-quality, freely available textbooks to the worldwide community of educators and learners. Most of the projects mentioned in this module have information on their site on how you can participate in their project. There are many levels of participation; for example, you can:

- subscribe to their mailing list or news feed
- proofread pages
- contribute content you have already created
- help locate authors who may want to contribute content
- author new content
- create images
- write a review about an open textbook
- provide translation support for content
- donate funds to keep the project running
- use open textbooks in your teaching and learning and talk with your colleagues about your experience
- host an in-person event for content creators to gather and work together
- contact the project's coordinator and ask what is needed and how you can help.

OER stories from around the world

[It's 2 am in South Africa](#) and a delivery van is taking 100 hard copies of the free high school science text to a school in a small village ...

Your experience using open and freely shared course-related materials is valuable in the reuse and evolution of the materials. [Tell us your story](#); how you've used these materials and how their use has impacted how you teach or learn.

Activity: Review an Open Textbook

Using the sites mentioned in this module, review a few open textbooks that you can use in your teaching and learning. If you are not ready to replace your existing traditional textbook with an open textbook, analyze what topics are weak or missing in your present textbook and use the open textbook for supplemental materials.

Activity: Share Your Experience

We're discussing the new avenues for teachers and learners to select and augment learning resources that meet one's unique teaching and learning needs, including open textbooks. In the OER Commons discussion "[Teaching and Learning](#)," share your thoughts about this important issue. Here are a few questions to consider in your post:

1. If you have used an open textbook, share your experience.
2. If you haven't used an open textbook, what are the adoption issues?
3. What have been your students' reactions to using an open textbook?
4. What are your thoughts or experiences with participating in open textbook projects? What role(s) did you take? (e.g., authoring content, editor, etc.)

For More Information

The following resources have been selected to provide more information on concepts we covered in this module.

- OER Commons textbooks:
http://www.oercommons.org/courses/material_types/textbooks
- Public Domain Textbook Sources:
<http://cnx.org/content/m14471/latest>

Other modules in this course include ...

- [Why OER?](#)
- [Finding OER Materials You Can Start Using Now](#)
- [Tagging, Rating, and Reviewing OER Materials](#)
- [My OER Portfolio](#)
- [Submitting Materials to OER Commons](#)
- [OER Licensing and Conditions of Use](#)
- [What is Localization?](#)
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OER Commons Links

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To see the ever-growing list of the new content providers and contributors to OER Commons, visit the [Content Providers](#) page often. You can be one too!

“Quotable Quote”

Knowledge is the only kind of wealth that multiples when you give it away.
[\[footnote\]](#)

Schwartz, P. (1996). *The Art of the Long View*. New York: Doubleday.

About This Module

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For more information, visit <http://www.iskme.org> and <http://elearningnetworks.com>.

OER Glossary

The following terms have been used in the course “[The How-Tos of OER Commons](#).”

Bottom up: an informational classification scheme that emerges from a grassroots level. In OER, tags are a bottom up way to classify data. The opposite of top down.

Licensing: The process of choosing and assigning a license to an open educational resource by the original creator of that resource. OER creators can choose from several licenses offered by organizations such as Creative Commons—with the license typically stipulating the conditions under which that resource can be used, shared, adapted, or distributed by other users.

Localization: The process through which educational resources are adapted to meet local teaching and learning needs. Resource localization might entail, e.g., translating a lesson plan into another language, removing parts of a course module that are too complex for a given set of students.

Metadata: Basic descriptive data about an educational resource, which help users more easily find and use the resource. It is “data about data,” or attributes that describe the data, and includes descriptors such as title, language, author, and grade level, creation date, etc.

OER Commons: OER that can be accessed through OER Commons are created, housed, and maintained through institutions, collections, and authors that partner with OER Commons to share their data.

Open Educational Resources (OER): Teaching and learning materials that are freely available online for everyone to use, whether you are an instructor, student, or self-learner. Examples of OER include: full courses, course modules, syllabi, lectures, homework assignments, quizzes, lab and classroom activities, pedagogical materials, games, simulations, and many more resources contained in digital media collections from around the world.

Open textbook: Digitized textbooks freely available with nonrestrictive licenses.

Parent materials: Materials that belong to other people that you used in creating your own.

Parent URL: The web address where the parent materials are located.

Peer production: The process of online, collaborative content creation by peers, most often facilitated through an authoring platform or wiki. The project Free High School Science Texts, which draws on online volunteers and a collaborative authoring platform to create free-to-use textbooks for South African schools, is one example of the peer production process.

Remix: adapting the work for your own use.

Reuse: The adaptation, remixing or modification of OER for new and/or local purposes.

TagCloud: A set of tags associated with a resource or a set of resources, which are displayed in a cluster next to the resource(s). The size of the fonts that represent the tags in the cloud provides an indication of how common each tag is: Common tags that occur frequently across a set of resources are typically displayed in large, bold font, while less common tags are displayed in a smaller font.

Tags: Tags are a bottom up, user-generated classification system for educational resources, and frequently serve as an alternative or addition to a top down, expert-created classification system. Tags are words assigned to resources by the users of those resources. For example, one user of a lesson plan about the Spanish influenza of 1918 might assign a tag such as flu, while another might assign a tag such as pandemic. Once assigned by users, tags are tied to the given resource, and become a searchable way to find that resource as well as other resources that are tagged or associated with the same labels.

Top down: an informational classification scheme that is created by a site's administrator. In OER, keywords are a top down way to classify data. The

opposite of bottom up.

URL pointer: The web address where your shared materials are stored.

About This Module

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Course contributors are Lisa Petrides, Amee Godwin, and Cynthia Jimes, and online learning consultant, Patricia Delich.

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